

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 STATE 064008

63

ORIGIN EA-10

INFO OCT-01 CCO-00 SS-15 SSO-00 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 /031 R

DRAFTED BY EA/P:MSMITH:BB

APPROVED BY EA - MR. HABIB

EA - MR. MILLER

S/S-O: MTANNER

----- 029820

O 210207Z MAR 75 ZFF4

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL ASWAN NIACT IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 064008

TOSEC 862

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A)

SUBJECT: NEWSWEEK COVER ON INDOCHINA

REF: JERUSALEM 579

FOR AMBASSADOR ANDERSON FROM HABIB

1. FOLLOWING ARE MY ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS POSED BY PHIL
COOK OF NEWSWEEK MARCH 19:

2. ON THE RECORD: CURRENT NORTH VIETNAMESE ATTACKS
REPRESENT A MAJOR, CAREFULLY COORDINATED SERIES OF ATTACKS
ON SELECTED SOUTH VIETNAMESE TARGET AREAS. THIS SECOND
PHASE OF THE DRY SEASON OFFENSIVE IS ON A MUCH MORE MASSIVE
SCALE THAN WAS PHASE I. SOUTH VIET-NAM IS CHOOSING
WHAT TO DEFEND WITH THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO IT. FACTORS
GOING INTO THIS DECISION ARE 1) SVN VIEW OF COMMUNIST PLANS
AND CAPABILITIES 2) WHAT SVN BELIEVES IS IMPORTANT TO
DEFEND 3) THE NEED TO HUSBAND RESOURCES IN THE FACE OF
FUTURE FURTHER AID CUTS. WHILE WE KNEW 1975 WAS LIKELY
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 064008

TO BE A SIGNIFICANT YEAR MILITARILY, NO ONE KNEW HOW FAR

THE COMMUNISTS WERE PREPARED TO GO MILITARILY. WHAT WE ARE SEEING NOW ARE GROSS VIOLATIONS OF THE PARIS ACCORDS ON A MASSIVE SCALE WHICH CANNOT BE COMPARED TO ANY VIOLATIONS

WHICH MAY HAVE BEEN PERPETRATED BY THE SOUTH. CLEARLY, THE COMMUNISTS HAVE ABANDONED POLITICAL NEGOTIATIONS ROUTE IN FAVOR OF A MILITARY SOLUTION. THE SOUTH HAS THE WILL TO PUT UP A GOOD FIGHT IN THOSE AREAS THAT REALLY COUNT.

3. ON BACKGROUND: WE WITHDREW THE AMERICANS FROM THE HIGHLANDS NOT BECAUSE WE KNEW WELL IN ADVANCE THAT THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE WERE GOING TO ABANDON THE AREA BUT BECAUSE THE INTENSITY OF THE FIGHTING IN BAN ME THUOT AND OTHER INDICATIONS SHOWED THAT THERE COULD BE CONSIDERABLE DANGER TO THEM. THE PRESS STORY ALLEGING A DEAL BETWEEN THIEU AND THE COMMUNISTS OVER THE HIGHLANDS IS SHEER NONSENSE. THE PARATROOPS DIVISION WAS BROUGHT BACK TO THE SAIGON AREA IN ORDER TO ASSIST IN THE DEFENSE OF THE CAPITAL NOT, AS ALLEGED, TO STAVE OFF A COUP. ATTACK ON TAY NINH ON A LARGER SCALE IS EXPECTED, AND TROOP MOVEMENT PROBABLY RELATED TO THAT. WHILE SOME GENERALS MIGHT GRUMBLE IN SOUTH OVER THIEU'S POLICY THEY WOULD PROBABLY AGREE THAT A PULLOUT BEFORE SUFFERING A DEFEAT THERE WAS A MORE ACCEPTABLE OPTION.

4. THERE IS A STOCKPILE OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES IN SVN BUT THE DRAWDOWNS ARE GREAT AND AT SOME POINT IN THE NEAR FUTURE, WILL BECOME A SERIOUS PROBLEM, HENCE OUR SUPPLEMENTARY AID REQUEST. HOW CAN WE NOT SUPPLY PEOPLE WHO HAVE THE WILL TO DEFEND THEMSELVES THE MATERIEL TO DO SO? A CUT OFF DATE FOR AID TO CAMBODIA MAKES NO SENSE INASMUCH AS THE COMMUNISTS WILL JUST HAVE TO SIT ON THEIR HANDS FOR THREE MONTHS KNOWING THE OTHER SIDE WILL EVENTUALLY GIVE UP. WHEN COMMUNISTS ADOPT THE MILITARY PATH AS THEY ARE DOING IN SVN NO NEGOTIATIONS ARE POSSIBLE UNTIL THEY SUFFER SERIOUS SETBACKS. EVEN THE MOST VOCAL CRITICS OF THIEU IN THE SOUTH ARE NOT PRO-COMMUNIST. IN FACE OF ADVERSITY THEY WILL PROBABLY RALLY AROUND THE GVN.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 064008

5. THOSE QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE SECRETARY PERSONALLY, BEST ANSWERED FROM HIM. THEY DID NOT ARISE IN ANY WAY DURING COOKS INTERVIEW WITH ME.

6. ON QUESTIONS (C): NO. THE DECISION TO WITHDRAW FROM THE HIGHLANDS AND OTHER RECENT ACTIONS BY THE GVN REFLECT DIFFICULT CHOICES THAT THIEU FELT HE HAD TO MAKE IN SETTING HIS DEFENSE PRIORITIES. FACED WITH COMMUNIST

ATTACKS ON AN INTENSITY SIMILAR TO THE HEAVIEST SEEN IN

THE SOUTH, AND ON A SCALE MORE WIDESPREAD THAN THAT OF 1972, THE GVN HAD TO BITE THE BULLET AND MAKE THE TOUGH DECISIONS. WITHDRAWAL FROM LARGE AREAS IS THE ONLY FEASIBLE WAY TO PROTECT THE MAJOR POPULATION CENTERS AND ECONOMICALLY IMPORTANT AREAS OF THE COUNTRY. WITH THE SIGNIFICANT REDUCTION IN AMERICAN MILITARY ASSISTANCE IN THE PAST TWO YEARS, AND WITH WHAT IS UNDOUBTEDLY THIEU'S JUDGMENT THAT THE PROSPECTS FOR FUTURE AID LEVELS AT BEST IS CLOUDY, THIEU HAS HAD TO CONSERVE WHATEVER HE HAS AVAILABLE NOW, SHORTEN HIS SUPPLY LINES AND WITHDRAW FROM WHAT IS NOT ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL.

7. QUESTION (D) NO. THE GVN IS PUTTING ITSELF IN A POSITION TO DEFEND THE MAIN CENTERS OF POPULATION. IT HAS NOT LOST ITS VIABILITY AS A STATE. WITH OUR ASSISTANCE A STAUNCH DEFENSE CAN BE COUNTED. NO ONE CAN SAY OF THE PRESENT SITUATION THAT THE BEGINNING OF THE END MAY HAVE IN FACT BEGUN. HOWEVER, WITHOUT ADEQUATE AID THIS COULD BECOME A SELF-FULFILLING

8. QUESTION (F) THE IMPACT OF THE LOSS OF INDOCHINA HAS CLEARLY BEEN SPELLED OUT BY A NUMBER OF WORLD LEADERS OF MANY POLITICAL PERSUASIONS. SHOULD AMERICAN RELIABILITY AND WILLINGNESS TO ASSIST AN ALLY WHO IS PREPARED TO DEFEND HIMSELF IS PROVEN INADEQUATE IN INDOCHINA, OUR RELIABILITY AS A FRIEND AND ALLY THROUGHOUT THE WORLD WILL BE--IS BEING--QUESTIONED. IF WE ARE PREPARED TO ACCEPT THIS AND THE STATUS THAT GOES ALONG WITH IT--THE AMERICAN PUBLIC SHOULD KNOW WHAT IT IS GETTING INTO AND MAKE THAT DECISION CONSCIOUSLY AND KNOWINGLY. NO ALLY WOULD BE IMMUNE TO THESE DOUBTS AND FEARS AND NO
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 STATE 064008

SECURITY RELATIONSHIP WOULD BE SACROSANCT. INGERSOLL

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 MAR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: buchandr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE064008
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: MSMITH:BB
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750098-0694
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750327/aaaaaxvf.tel
Line Count: 155
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 JERUSALEM 579
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: buchandr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 MAY 2003 by ElyME>; APPROVED <07 OCT 2003 by buchandr>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NEWSWEEK COVER ON INDOCHINA
TAGS: OVIP, (KISSINGER, HENRY A)
To: ASWAN
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006